

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** Carlton Pittman <rucpitt@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2023 10:34 PM  
**To:** patricia kwiatkowski; rsmith9431@gmail.com; drpagedyer@gmail.com;  
BOCmurdock@gmail.com; alan@alanholdenrealty.com; arnold.geraldnc@me.com  
**Cc:** Heather Finnell  
**Subject:** January BOC Meeting Comments

I know I can be long winded. If you get to the end, I appreciate you taking the time to read the entire thing. I also appreciate each of your service to the town. I know it is not easy some days.

I welcome any comments you may have.

### **Town staff and Salaries**

Since I started paying more attention to town meetings and the town budget, it has been obvious that many if not all town employees are underpaid, significantly in some cases. The town cannot expect to recruit, hire, and retain talented, qualified individuals when it underpays its employees.

I strongly encourage you to approve the proposed salary and wage increases, and make them effective as soon as possible. Find a way please. With all the other items the town spends \$ on, their people should be a top priority.

I know of one town employee that left for \$4/hour more at a private company job, which is significant when you only make \$35-40k/year.

The Holden Beach police force has been working with two open police officer positions for over a year. They do not need to go into another busy summer season down two officers again. Please adopt the salary increases for the HBPD as a part of the overall Town staff salary adjustments. This should be a TOP priority for the town.

That said, I wish there were a way to keep the staff salary information out of the general public view. I appreciate the transparency, but no one in general wants their income revealed publicly. How would any of you like it if your salary or income were public for all to see? I appreciate open meeting laws and the right of the public at large to know budget numbers, but in a relatively small community like this, discretion would be appropriate. I will leave this to you all. I know how publicizing salary figures can cause resentment among employees. I understand if there are (legal) reasons why you must publicize them though.

### **796 OBW**

**Please sell 796 OBW ASAP.** I have heard Commissioner Murdock say he wants to hold on to every inch of property the town owns. I would agree with that with the exception of 796. The town does not need to be in the residential rental business, anymore than it needs to be in the vacation rental business. Sell 796.

I keep hearing Commissioner Pat talk about a community center at 796. For what? Who is expected to use 796, and how much would it rent for for special uses? Free?

What will possibly be the cost longer term for maintaining it, insuring it, and so forth. I know my own Wind & Hail insurance has doubled in the last 18 months. How can the town possibly expect to ever break even on 796? It never will, especially if you factor in the original purchase price.

Or maybe tear down the house and use the lot to increase parking in that area. We may never be able to be the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) requirements to be a Corp beach west of Greensboro street without the town purchasing some very expensive lots. Why not use the entire lot of 796 for additional parking?

### **Bulkhead 800 block lots**

\$298,000 to bulkhead 700' of marsh?! – For what? Are you kidding me? In a year when the budget is so tight that you cannot find a couple thousand dollars for a 21<sup>st</sup> century A/V system for town meetings – something that almost EVERYONE has asked for – and you want to spend \$298k for a seawall on land that has not eroded in the 30 years I have driven by it? Please walk away from this expenditure.

What about a dog park which so many people have asked for since we lost the previous dog park?

There are WAY higher priorities for the town than putting expensive bulkheads on the 800 block lots. Please NO.

### **Fire Station #2**

With the increasing number of full-time, semi-full time, part time residents and renters on the island more of the year, I very much support the idea of staffing the #2 fire station at Starfish Drive as soon as reasonably possible. I realize this may require updating (or replacing) the fire station per the fire chief's request.

How about the town sell 796 OBW as is and use that money to uplift or replace fire station #2 asap.

Welcome Commissioner Arnold.

Carlton Pittman

Full time HB resident. Lifelong NC resident.

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** rpaarfus <rpaarfus@ec.rr.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 16, 2023 7:35 AM  
**To:** Heather Finnell  
**Subject:** FW: Comments on January BOC agenda items

Good morning Heather,

Please include my email below in the minutes for the January BOC meeting.

Thanks,

Rick Paarfus

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

**From:** Rick Paarfus <rpaarfus@ec.rr.com>  
**Date:** 1/15/23 8:43 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** patricia kwiatkowski <pattykwi@gmail.com>, Brian Murdock <BOCMurdock@gmail.com>, Rick Smith <rsmith9431@gmail.com>, Page Dyer <drpagedyer@gmail.com>, alan@alanholdenrealty.com, arnold.geraldnc@me.com  
**Subject:** Comments on January BOC agenda items

Greetings Commissioners,

I hope you all had a great Christmas and Happy New Year. I wanted to provide some thoughts for your consideration relative to some of the agenda items on the January BOC agenda

Bulk heading of Town Property – Please do not undertake this project this year. I had discussed via e-mail with Commissioner Murdock if we had any surveys identifying erosion loss on those properties. He responded that we did have a wet land survey and he wanted to make use of it before it expired, which is understandable. While I appreciate his response, a single survey does not indicate that there is a problem nor how fast it is progressing. Mr. Murdock and I also discussed the erosion along areas east of the pump station, notably at the pump station and along the fit trail where landscape timbers are already undermined next to the marsh. There is evidence of erosion into the marsh at some of the Fit trail stations (particularly at Station 14). There is a linear crack along several sidewalk slabs that indicate the substrate is washing out. In several areas the ground is sloping into the marsh within 10 feet of the sidewalk. The backside of the 794 pump station is very close to the marsh and may need bulk heading as well. I understand that there is a deep structure/wet well there that is designed not to float, but it still would be prudent to protect it. I appears that the electrical system and the sewer run along the north side of the road between the sidewalk and the marsh. When the bike lanes are built, the run-off from them will exacerbate the erosion in these narrow areas. If we get a big storm with wash over or fast moving flood waters in these narrow areas, the utilities could be severely damaged. That type of damage may take considerable time to repair leaving permanent residents west of the pier without a place to live and rental properties unusable. Protecting these narrow areas and the existing infrastructure there, as well as the road, is far

more important for the residents and property owners than bulk heading the vacant town properties. I did also note that there is a lot of dirt between the sidewalk and the marsh on the undeveloped lots proposed for bulk heading, along with much heavier vegetation than in the areas identified above, which will help keep those parcels stable. As an alternative, could some type or rip rap be used as an interim fix if it costs significantly less?

With regard to 796 OBW, please negotiate a sale to the adjacent property owners as requested by the owner of 798 OBW at a previous BOC meeting. I think renovating for rental purposes or for a community center is a bad idea. Sell it and be done with it. This could free up revenue to upgrade the Fire House as requested in agenda item

11. Alternatively, if you don't sell it, could it be used to house the firemen in lieu of modifying the fire house?

When negotiating with the selected engineer for the Water System Asset Inventory and A Assessment, PLEASE do not constrain the firm to employing an additional water tower as the prescribed means to increase system capacity. Not saying a water tower won't be the solution, but, a booster pump, increased pipe diameter, additional supply line, etc. may be a better solution, particularly when you consider the life cycle cost of a water tower. Let's not tie their hands.

Changes to Personnel Pay Plan – I absolutely agree that our folks need to be adequately compensated. However, I hope the BOC will consider total compensation vs. salaries only before approving the increases. For instance, our manager has his health, vision, and dental for himself & family as well as disability and life insurance completely paid for by the town. A manager elsewhere may be paid more than ours because he must pay some portion of those premiums himself. For hard to fill vacancies such as the police, we absolutely need to pay fair market value. For other jobs, where there is very little turnover, this should be considered as well. What I would like to see instead of a straight salary increase (which is forever), is a lesser increase coupled with a bigger performance bonus to incentivise the employees that totals to the recommended increase where the increase is substantial (if 15% is recommended, do 8% salary increase along with 7% incentive). I would like to see this for a couple of years until the economy works itself out. Remember, most of the tax payers are not getting a significant increase in their pay and many can't pass on the cost. The town manager is recommending a 238K annual increase that will be forever, and I don't know if that includes the fully burdened cost of the new position or any other increased cost (such as a salary percentage match to 401K/403B plans).

The BOC/Town has acquired the pier and block Q at considerable cost and has not determined how much it will cost to get these properties up and running, but it will not be cheap. The Corps Engineered Beach project is another concern as well. In addition, we are all looking at reassessments of properties for county and town tax purposes. In all of these topics, I am not hearing anything about cutting costs, but rather that rents/occupancy taxes are way up for the past few years and it will pay for all this stuff. Rampant inflation and a looming recession can depress the vacation rental market as folks cut back to make ends meet, reducing town revenue. Rising interest rates can also drive property values down, particularly in the vacation home market, causing owners to challenge their property value assessments which may reduce town revenues too. I hope the BOC will stop taking on any long term debt or encumbrances like the pier (e.g. a PARTF grant for Sailfish Park) and instead reduce our long term debts instead of taking on any low value (796 OBW) expenditures.

A general comment: On many occasions, documents such as the bulk head plans and 796 OBW plans are scanned at an insufficient resolution to allow for enlarging them enough to read print and see details. Please fix this.

IF you read this far, thanks. As previously stated, these comments are for your consideration, that's it. Please do not reply.

V/R

Rick Paarfus  
140 Tarpon Drive

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** rodom001@carolina.rr.com  
**Sent:** Monday, January 16, 2023 10:45 PM  
**To:** 'rsmith9431@gmail.com'; 'BOCmurdock@gmail.com'; 'drpagedyer@gmail.com';  
'pattykwi@gmail.com'; Heather Finnell; 'HBPOA@hotmail.com';  
'alan@alanholdenrealty.com'  
**Subject:** Tuesday's Agenda

To say my family has seen changes over decades of property ownership (789 OBW) is an understatement! Most changes have been positive, I continue to advocate for common sense, good judgement, and fair representation for those of us who do not have a vote, but support town projects and salaries with our taxes.

As property owners directly impacted by Tuesday's decisions regarding the bulkhead/parking lot and the 796 house, we strongly need your support to help reach outcomes that will have a positive, lasting effect on the island over time.

Taking away green space and tampering with these areas disrupt the naturalness of the marsh and its eco purpose. A parking lot is an abuse of this land. Please do not venture into this project. It not only mars the beauty of the marsh area, but the expense incurred could be better used for other endeavors.

The property at 796 has been a rental property for DECADES and has posed NO problems. Making this property a public bathhouse is just asking for trouble. I have stated in the past, issues that we deal with having the existing parking lot near our property. PLEASE RENOVATE AND RENT 796!

Facilities for public use can be installed near the pump station for convenience of beach goers. We have no objection for that provision, but strongly oppose 796 for public accommodations.

Thank you for making wise decisions concerning these matters.

Ann Odom

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** Chris Bruno <chrisbruno13@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 16, 2023 11:40 PM  
**To:** rsmith9431@gmail.com; rsmith@gmail.com; BOCmurdock@gmail.com; drpagedyer@gmail.com; pattykwi@gmail.com; Heather Finnell; HBPOA; Tim Evans; David Hewett; alan@alanholdenrealty.com  
**Subject:** Comments for meeting on 1/17/2023

Holden Beach Commissioners and Town Hall Staff:

My comments on select items:

### **Bulkheading 700/800 block:**

It is ridiculously expensive at \$298,000. Total town parking revenue for 2022 was \$455,000. Doesn't really make sense to spend 2/3 of 2022 annual revenue to bulkhead for additional parking. That money will NEVER be recovered by the additional spaces bulkheading would allow. Besides the financial reason for opposition, I believe the entire 700/800 block area should be kept in its current green space form. It is way more valuable in its wild state than parking or building bulkheads could ever be.

### **796 property:**

First, if we can rent it, given its proximity to the pump station and the noise it creates, then why can't we just sell it? If we disclose the potential noise issue in the listing, the buyer would purchase with foreknowledge of the issue. It's buyer beware. This would be my first choice.

Second, if we can't sell, my next option is the short term rental. This option brings its own questions. How much is the initial renovation to bring it up to rental condition? How much revenue would it generate as a short term rental, thus determining the payback period before it turns a profit? What about operating costs for utilities, ongoing repairs, insurance, potential liabilities? How will they be paid, accounted for, and who is responsible?

I am totally opposed to converting it into any sort of restroom or bathhouse facility. This is a nightmare scenario with no upside. I cannot think of a reasonable argument for it. There isn't enough traffic to warrant its necessity. I am also skeptical that it will be maintained and monitored in a way that the island would be proud of considering there is already a trash and cleanliness problem with the summertime portable toilet in the pump house parking area there every year.

### **Overall development plan:**

I don't feel like we need to keep building. Let's pump the brakes and prioritize development. There is nothing wrong with keeping the island a little wild and green. Parking spots are ugly and while they attract visitors, those visitors don't provide any revenue to the island outside their parking fee. It seems revenue is in short supply, so spending money we don't have to attract more people who only drain revenue further seems counterintuitive.

**Pier:** We dropped a lot of money on it. Let's finish that first and make sure it is a positive addition that has a lot to offer. Fishing, parking, game room or other available activities, mini golf course and snack bar/ice cream shop for starters. Something that draws people and gives them something to do on the island.

**Bike lanes:** These should be next. Give people on the island a safe place to ride bikes. I was as disappointed as Mayor Holden about its delay.

Thank you for considering my comments and I trust you will take mine and all other comments to heart before making these important decisions concerning the future of our beautiful island and keep it a place we are proud to call home.

Chris Bruno

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** Stephanie Bruno <csezbruno@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 16, 2023 11:05 PM  
**To:** rsmith@gmail.com; rsmith9431@gmail.com; BOCmurdock@gmail.com; drpagedyer@gmail.com; pattykwi@gmail.com; Heather Finnell; HBPOA@hotmail.com; Tim Evans; David Hewett; alan@alanholdenrealty.com  
**Subject:** Letter is to be used for Public Record for the Holden Beach Town Meeting on 1/17

Letter is to be used for Public Record for the Holden Beach Town Meeting on 1/17

I am writing in reference to:

- Update on adding bulkheaded parking lots in the 700 and 800 Blocks of OBW,
- Preliminary architectural plans for the town-owned property at 796 OBW,

The estimate/bid for bulk-heading the 800 blocks owned by the town came back at \$298k. This is money that the town does not have and would be a waste of funds even if the funds were available to the town. This does not even cover the price of building the actual lots after bulk-heading. The revenue from any additional parking created would never pay for the expenses needed for constructing this parking in the 700 and 800 blocks. Also, this area does not need more parking. The people parking in the existing 700 block already do not like having to walk to the 800 block beach access, so naturally there will be more people trying to walk through private residences further down the 700 and 800 blocks to access the beach.

The infrastructure of the island was not created for cars cruising to look for parking all over the island. The area you are wanting to put parking is in a residential area with homes where people live. The proposed area is currently natural and adding parking will negatively impact the marsh and whole island ecosystem over time. The established parking lot at 700 already has trash thrown into the lot and marsh by day visitors. The owners are the one that go and pick up this trash. When it is not picked up, it not only looks bad, but it gets blown all over the island. When we have extremely high tides, the trash that we can't get to in the marsh can be seen floating down the marsh to be deposited elsewhere around the island and in the ocean. The natural beauty of Holden Beach will be negatively impacted with the current direction of increasing parking in residential areas of the island. We who live here did not buy houses in areas like Myrtle Beach for this reason, so why is the board trying to change our beach into a little Myrtle? Holden Beach is known as a family beach, and we who have homes on the island want our island to stay a family beach. We want to keep our area residential.

The statement made that the marsh lots in 700 and 800 NEED to be bulkheaded to protect the island and marsh is inaccurate information. The families that own the 4 houses next to me and have owned their properties since the 1940's can attest that those areas are still the same. Other families that have lived here will also state that the marsh areas without bulkheads have not eroded. The angle that the board has tried to create in order to suggest bulk-heading has to be done or land will be lost has just not occurred. This was only recently brought up in a meeting as a way to get this done so naturally parking would be able to come next. No bulk-heads equals no ability to create the new parking lots. If the board was truly only concerned about getting the land protected by erosion by bulk-heading, they would also be trying to bulkhead the town property on the marsh in the 500 block where the exercise equipment is located. They do not have a concern about getting that area bulk-headed to "protect it", because parking can't be put in this town owned lot area.

As for the plans for the house at 796, we who live in this area think that the town should sell the house. The board is throwing out several "ideas" for this home, but not much thought is being put into the longevity and cost of the plan. One of the plans we have seen the board toss around is fixing up the house and having the town rent out the house. The house has not been taken care of since being purchased by the town, so it needs ALOT of work. I saw the list of what needs fixing that the town sent out when requesting bids from non town employee contractors.



These repairs in itself will be quite expensive. We all know how much time and money it takes for upkeep on our own homes here at Holden. The person that owns the house directly next to 796 has understandably asked the town to do something about the house that the town has allowed to become run down next to his own home. 796 was purchased by the town when the pump station was being rebuilt, supposedly because it would be too loud for someone to live next to it. Ironically the town then allowed people to live in the house after they purchased it until about a year ago. The people living there were made to leave so the board could look at using the house as some type of Rec house. Now they are trying to figure out what to do with it because it is sitting empty and looks so run down. The town does not have the money, so I am not sure why the town does not just sell it to pay for things that are truly needed for our island. All of us that live near this house wish the town would sell the house. Obviously people can live in it just fine, so why did the town purchase it? Our neighbors that live directly across from the house says the sound does not bother them, and the pump does not run for very long each day. We live near 796 too, and have not noticed anything that would cause someone from being able to live in the house next to the pump house. It would just need to be disclosed upon selling the home. I have no doubt that it would be sold quickly to a new home owner if put on the market.

If the town selling the 796 house is not an option, we that live here would rather it be a town rented house and not bathrooms or a bathhouse. Even if the town were to put up cameras to help monitor, the town could not do that inside the house and who would actually monitor the cameras? The town has said they can't afford to pay the police and fire employees more money, so I am not sure who would be monitoring this area and cameras. The existing 700 lot with the porta potty is not cleaned on a regular basis as is, so I am not sure how adding a bathroom and showers would be a good idea. We that live here already get to see a lot of crazy things that go on in the parking lot in the 700 block lot and that is done in plain sight. I can't imagine what would go on behind closed doors in a shower bath house or Rec center/pit stop house as others on the board have called it. By selling the 796 house, the town can use the funds to go towards the pier that was recently purchased or to put towards creating shower rinse off stations and any needed repairs at each beach access. There are so many needs for our island, and I just don't see spending money we don't have on non essential things as being the best interest for our island.

I know this is not the first letter you have read from me and is a summary as a homeowner of what has been observed since these plans have started. I again thank you for being willing to listen to me as a resident that will be directly affected by living so close to the 796 house and parking lots. I also speak as a Holden Beach owner that is concerned by the negative long term effects this plan will have for all of us that live on Holden Beach.

Thanks, Stephanie Bruno  
783 Ocean Boulevard West

Sent from my iPhone